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\$1 Million In Grants Go To Large Pelagics Research

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UNH Media Relations

May 10, 2006

DURHAM, N.H. -- The Large Pelagics Research Center at the University of New Hampshire -- dedicated to the study of large, open-ocean migratory species like bluefin tuna, billfish, and leatherback turtles -- has awarded one million dollars to large pelagics research in its inaugural competitive grants program. Awarded annually, the grants go to American researchers and their international collaborators for technology and modeling development in support of large pelagics research.

The center received 43 pre-proposals with approximately \$4 million in requests. Full proposals were solicited from 22 researchers. After a stringent and lengthy peer-review process (involving 90 external reviews) ten proposals were selected for funding.

"The diversity and the inter-disciplinary nature of the chosen projects are essential to the study of highly migratory species," said Molly Lutcavage, director of the Large Pelagics Research Center and research associate professor at UNH. Awards went to the following projects:

- Technological development of a high resolution, rapid survey capability to identify spawning habitat of large pelagic fishes (\$176,210)

Robert Cowen, Ph.D., Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami

- Reconstructing diet histories and migration pathways of bluefin tuna from compound-specific stable isotope analyses of scales and bone (\$94,832)

Simon Thorrold, Ph.D. and Leah A. Houghton, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

- Leatherback turtle foraging habitats in the north Atlantic: Implications for fisheries interactions (\$90,330)

Amanda Southwood, Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Wilmington and David Kirby, Ph.D., The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, New Caledonia

- Habitat utilization, movement patterns, and post-release survivorship of porbeagle sharks (*Lamna nasus*) captured on longline in the North Atlantic (\$126,516)

Greg Skomal, Ph.D., Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and Massachusetts Shark Research Program (principal investigator)

- Genetic Discrimination of Bluefin Tuna Spawned in the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico (\$146,045)

John Graves, Ph.D., Virginia Institute of Marine Science at the College of William and Mary (principal investigator)

- Towards Long-Term Tracking of Billfish (\$98,550)

Kim Holland and David Itano, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, University of Hawaii

- Assessment of natal homing and mixing of Atlantic bluefin tuna using d13C and d18O signatures in otoliths (\$117,299)

Jay Rooker, Ph.D., Department of Marine Biology, Texas A&M University and David H. Secor, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

- PCBs as novel tracers for determining Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) population mixing in the North Atlantic (\$106,862)

Rebecca M. Dickhut, Ph.D., Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and Ashok D. Deshpande, Ph.D., National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- Spatial Ecology of Marine Turtles in the Eastern Atlantic (\$187,007)

Michael S. Coyne, Ph.D., Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University and Brendan J. Godley, Ph.D., Centre for Ecology and Conservation, University of Exeter in Cornwall

- Distribution, migration and behavior of the ocean sunfish, *Mola mola*, in the north Atlantic (~\$100,000)

W. Hunt Howell, Ph.D., University of New Hampshire, and Inga Potter, University of New Hampshire

For more information, visit <http://www.largepelagics.unh.edu/>.